

Historic District Review Committee

Staff Report
November 9, 2009

Action Item

CAPP 2009-0014 Good Residence: Rear Porch Construction and Deck Repair in the Waterford Historic District. MCPI 303-16-3535.

Background

The subject property is located at 15567 Second Street in the Waterford Historic District. Known as the Asbury Johnson House, its namesake built the vernacular Victorian dwelling in 1886. It is a clapboard clad, frame building with a central gable, $\frac{3}{4}$ width front porch, $2\frac{1}{2}$ windows, and a standing seam metal roof. The building is ell shaped, with a one-story, shed roof addition infilling the rear ell. The applicant states in the Statement of Justification (SOJ) that this addition was a rear porch that was enclosed in the past. Also noted in the SOJ is that approximately 30 years ago, a former owner constructed a wooden deck off the rear (west elevation) of this enclosed porch. An exterior brick chimney with a stone base rises along the rear elevation of the two-story ell.

The applicant proposes to construct a 16' by 13' porch on the rear of the Asbury Johnson House, connected to the existing deck. The porch would allow the applicants to spend time outside in all types of weather. This porch would be the same depth as the existing deck. The applicant plans to repair the floor and replace the balustrade of the existing deck at the same time. The balustrade will be consistent on both the deck and the proposed porch, making a seamless visual connection between the two. In addition, a canopy will be added above the back door leading to the deck to provide shelter at the entrance. The SOJ states that no changes will be made to the main block of the house or its historic materials and the porch (and deck) could be removed in the future without affecting the historic building.

Since the Virginia Department of Historic Resources (VDHR) has an easement on the property, changes to the building must be reviewed and approved by the State as well as the County. In a letter dated October 20, 2009, VDHR approved the proposed project with the conditions that 1.) All exposed wood elements be painted and 2.) The porch addition and replacement elements be of wood.

According to the Zoning Administration Referral letter dated October 30, 2009, there are no zoning issues associated with this application.

Analysis

The Loudoun County Historic District Guidelines: Waterford Historic District (Waterford Guidelines) for existing buildings state that new porches should be constructed in a location that is based on historic precedent and with architectural details that relate to

the historic building (Waterford Guidelines, Guidelines for Existing Structures: Elements: Porticos, Front Porches, and Rear Porches, Guideline 4, p. 109). The Guidelines for New Construction go on to say that, "New porch designs should reflect the size, materials, proportion, and placement of historic porches in Waterford" (Waterford Guidelines, Guidelines for New Construction: Front and Rear Porches, Guideline 2, p. 70).

The proposed porch addition and deck repair will occur on the rear of the house, a location that relates to the historic house, which formerly had a porch in the rear ell, and the narrow lot. It is also a location for porches on neighboring houses as well as others throughout the Waterford Historic District. In addition, this location is minimally visible from the street and shielded from view by existing vegetation.

The new porch and deck combination will extend the full width of the rear elevation, just over 27'. Currently, the deck is approximately 17' wide and 16' deep. The proposed porch will align with the rear of the two-story ell and encompass a 4' section of the existing deck with the portion under roof being 14' wide and 16' deep. Making the outside living space span the rear elevation and aligning the porch roof with the rear ell will more clearly relate the existing and proposed elements to the historic building.

The deck and proposed porch is 6' above ground as the house is built into a hill that gradually slopes away from the street. An existing stair leading from the deck to the rear yard will remain. Painted lattice infills the space beneath the deck.

The architectural details, including materials and colors, for the proposed porch are analyzed below using the recommendations for materials, additions, and new construction in the Waterford Guidelines.

Paint Color

Although the HDRC does not have purview over paint color, the Waterford Guidelines provide recommendations for appropriate color choices and schemes based on the style and era of the building, incorporation into an existing color scheme, and general compatibility with adjacent buildings. Color recommendations also note that similar elements should be painted with the same color to create a unified appearance. (Waterford Guidelines, Guidelines for Materials: Paint and Color, Guidelines 1 and 2, p. 132). The Asbury Johnson house is painted white with black shutters and a black roof.

Roof

A hipped, standing seam metal roof prefinished in matte black to match the roof of the historic house is proposed for the porch. The proposed roof for the canopy is the same. Both roofs will have snowbirds. Matching an addition's roof materials and color with the existing house meets the Porticos, Front Porches, and Rear Porches guidelines, as well as the color recommendations of the Waterford Guidelines.

The proposed pitch for both roofs is a 3/12 pitch, the minimum recommended slope for standing seam metal roofs. A low angled pitch such as this is typical of porch roofs. The

Guidelines recommend that roof pitches match those on the existing building (Waterford Guidelines, Guidelines for Additions: Roof, Guideline 1, p. 82). The one-story enclosed porch in the rear ell has a low angled shed roof that is visible in the same elevation as the proposed porch. The pitch of this roof is slightly less than 3/12 as shown on the submitted plans and according to the applicant's architect. While not exact, the roof slopes are very similar and are not visible from the public way. The higher roof slope also meets recommended performance standards. Therefore, the varying pitches are acceptable in this application.

Gutters and Downspouts

The gutters will be 4" half-round gutters and the downspouts will be 3" round galvanized downspouts. Both will be painted white. The profiles of the proposed gutters and downspouts are appropriate to the building as recommended in the Waterford Guidelines. The Guidelines also recommend that the finish color for the gutters and downspouts be compatible with the overall color scheme for the historic building. The house and the proposed color for the new porch are white; therefore, white is a suitable color to paint the gutters and downspout (Waterford Guidelines, Guidelines for Existing Structures: Elements: Gutters and Downspouts, Guidelines 3, 4, and 5, p. 93). The downspouts will attach to the west (rear) side of both corner porch columns, an appropriate location that will blend in with the proposed porch.

Wood Porch Elements

Wood is the preferred material for porch elements, trim, and other decorative features (Waterford Guidelines, Guidelines for New Construction: Materials and Textures, Guideline 7, p. 75). Wood should be primed and painted to prevent rotting or insect damage. Natural wood finishes on typically painted elements, such as porches, is not recommended. Furthermore, decks should be painted following the same color scheme as the house in order to reduce the visual effects of this modern element (Waterford Guidelines, Guidelines for Materials: Wood, Maintenance Recommendation 5, p. 114; Paint and Color, Inappropriate Treatment 2, p. 132; Guidelines for New Construction: Decks, Guideline 5, pg. 71). These recommendations are consistent with the VDHR condition that all porch elements be wood and all exposed wood be painted.

The **structural elements** of the new porch will be built with pressure treated lumber. The exposed portions of the pressure treated lumber will be painted as recommended in the Waterford Guidelines and conditioned by VDHR (Waterford Guidelines, Guidelines for New Construction: Decks, Inappropriate Treatment 2, p. 71). The proposed color, white, relates to the white and black color scheme of the house and porch. Staff notes that the Guidelines recommend that pressure treated wood should season for one year before painting to prevent paint failure (Waterford Guidelines, Guidelines for Materials: Paint and Paint Color, Guidelines 1 and 4, p. 132).

The **floor** will be lpe or a similar rot resistant wood. The section under roof will be 5/4"x4" tongue and groove boards, flooring typical of historic porches. The deck section will be 5/4"x6" boards with 1/8" spacing. It will not be tongue and groove, as water

needs to drain through the open deck. The stair treads will also be replaced with a matching rot resistant wood.

The floor and stair treads will not be painted, but allowed to weather naturally to a gray color. Leaving the floor and stair treads unpainted does not meet the Waterford Guidelines. As with the structural elements, the flooring and stair treads should be painted to meet the Guidelines, as well as the VDHR approval conditions. A color keeping with the scheme of the porch/deck and house, as well as traditional porch floor colors, should be used.

The **balustrade** will be constructed of cedar or Douglas fir and painted white. This will visually connect the adjacent outside living elements, making it appear that they were constructed at the same time. The balustrade will meet the building code. It will be 3' high with a 3.5" half-round top rail and a 3.5"x1.5" bottom rail. The balusters will be square (1 3/8"x1 3/8") with 3 7/8" spaces between. The deck balustrade posts will be 6"x6" with chamfered corners and rounded tops. The simple detail of the porch balustrade is in keeping the location to the rear of the house and the vernacular Victorian style of the building. White will match the color scheme of the house and matches the front porch colors.

The porch **trim** will be cedar or poplar and painted white. The trim includes 1"x12" boards finishing the porch/deck floor joists and 1" x 4" trim finishing the lattice. The 6"x6" porch posts will be built up with 5/4" boards to make 7.5"x7.5" square posts. The corners will be chamfered and the base built up and finished with a 3/4"x3/4" scotia. A similar scotia finishes the top of the posts along with a larger cove molding at the top to create a simple capital.

The **canopy** will be supported by 4"x4" chamfered braces. The rafters will be 2"x6" boards finished with an ogee rafter tail. Both will be painted white. As with the balustrade, the simple but refined details for the balustrade and the canopy are in keeping with a rear porch constructed on a late nineteenth century vernacular interpretation of a Victorian residence.

Heavy duty (1") cedar **lattice** with a diagonal orientation and painted white will be installed beneath the deck and porch. Lattice is noted in the Waterford Guidelines as an appropriate method for screening the area between piers that support a porch (Waterford Guidelines, Guidelines for Existing Structures: Elements: Foundations, Inappropriate Treatment 3 and Photo Caption, p. 110). It is also recommended as a method to decrease the visual impact of a modern deck on a historic district (Waterford Guidelines, Guidelines for New Construction: Decks, Guideline 3.d., p. 71).

The lattice in the north elevation will be constructed as doors. Wrought iron, bean tip, strap hinges are proposed to attach the doors to the brick piers. Strap hinges should be 2/3 the width of the door that it supports. The proposed doors are 41" wide and the strap hinges will be between 24" and 26" long. Wrought iron of varying degrees of ornamentation was used on houses into the early 20th century; therefore, the proposed

use of these simple strap hinges on the utilitarian doors meets the Guidelines for architectural details.

Piers

Reinforced, square (12"x12"), brick piers measuring 6' in height are proposed as supports for the new porch. The deck supports will be 6"x6" painted cedar posts atop 8" high brick footers matching the brick porch piers. The use of brick piers and footers helps to reduce the visual effects of the modern deck and new porch as recommended in the Waterford Guidelines (Waterford Guidelines, Guidelines for New Construction: Decks, Guideline 3.a., p. 71).

The bricks will be hand-molded, oversized bricks with a buff mortar. The applicant verbally stated that the brick and mortar used for the piers would match the exterior brick chimney being enveloped by the proposed porch. This meets the Guidelines for Materials that recommend that bricks should be similar in size, texture, and color and mortar should match the color, texture, and joint size and tooling as existing masonry elements. The Guidelines go on to clarify that brick should replicate the color of locally fired bricks used for buildings in the historic district (Waterford Guidelines, Guidelines for Materials, Guidelines 2 and 3, p. 123). Staff requests that the applicant bring samples of the proposed brick and mortar mix, as well as color photographs of the existing brick chimney for the HDRC to evaluate during the review meeting.

Findings

1. The location and dimensions of the proposed rear porch are appropriate to the Asbury Johnson house. The location relates to the narrow lot shape, the former rear porch location, and the location of other porches in the Waterford Historic District. In addition, the porch will be minimally visible from the street. The dimensions maintain the width of the rear two-story ell and the rear elevation of the building.
2. The proposed porch and deck could be removed in the future without affecting the historic building.
3. The proposed colors for the roof, porch/deck (except flooring), and gutters and downspout relate to the color scheme of the historic house.
4. The proposed standing seam metal roof, wood porch elements, canopy, and gutters and downspouts meet the Waterford Guidelines for materials, details, and design.
5. Leaving the porch and deck floor unpainted does not meet the Guidelines for materials or decks.
6. The use of brick piers and footers, lattice, and a consistent balustrade between the proposed porch and deck help to mitigate the visual effects the modern deck element on the historic district as recommended in the Guidelines.

Recommendation and Conditions

Staff recommends approval of the application with the following conditions:

1. The porch/deck floor and stair treads be painted with a color that is consistent with the color scheme of the historic building and/or is a traditional porch floor paint color.
2. The brick and mortar proposed for the porch piers match the color, texture, size, and workmanship of the exterior rear brick chimney to be encompassed by the porch.

Suggested Motions

1. *I move that the Historic District Review Committee approve Certificate of Appropriateness 2009-0014 for the proposed new porch and deck repair on the rear of the Asbury Johnson House at 15567 Second Street in accordance with the Loudoun County Historic District Guidelines for the Waterford Historic and Cultural Conservation District based on the following findings...(see findings above)....and the following conditions...(see conditions above).....*
2. *I move that the Historic District Review Committee approve Certificate of Appropriateness 2009-0014 for the proposed new porch and deck repair on the rear of the Asbury Johnson House at 15567 Second Street in accordance with the Loudoun County Historic District Guidelines for the Waterford Historic and Cultural Conservation District based on the following findings (see findings above).*
3. *I move alternate motion...*